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PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFN #0246 1071935
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 171935Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0973
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS FREETOWN 000246

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DEPT FOR AF/W

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SL](#)
SUBJECT: SIERRA LEONE: UNHCR DELIVERS USG MESSAGE TO
LIBERIAN REFUGEES

REF: STATE 38825

[1](#)1. On April 17, Mr. Abid Mir, Deputy Representative, UNHCR Sierra Leone, informed Poloff that his office had received reftel USG announcement and had passed the information to all field offices. Mir said that repatriation is going well. He commented that as the June 30 deadline approaches, there seems to be increasing enthusiasm on the part of refugees to return. According to Mir, UNHCR returned over 3,000 refugees to Liberia in March. He said that total repatriation during this year has been over 5,000.

[1](#)2. Since the beginning of repatriation in 2004, over 22,000 refugees have been returned. He estimated that about the same number had returned spontaneously without assistance from UNHCR. He said that approximately 16,600 Liberian refugees remain in camps in Sierra Leone, and UNHCR believes that possibly up to 6,000 refugees may opt to stay behind after the deadline.
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